

## What You Should Know About Selling Fireworks in the District

The Fourth of July and fireworks go hand-in-hand for many people. While beautiful to behold, fireworks can be very dangerous.

The District of Columbia regulates fireworks sales and two agencies have primary responsibility for making sure fireworks are sold and enjoyed in a safe and legal manner—the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) and DC Fire & Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS).

All businesses that store or sell fireworks — in a temporary or permanent structure — must have posted a valid Basic Business License and Certificate of Occupancy — both issued by DCRA. Businesses also need to have a posted firework permit from the FEMS Fire Prevention Division.

### Four Steps to Selling Fireworks in the District of Columbia

**STEP 1.** Vendors first need to obtain a “letter of authorization” and a copy of the existing “Certificate of Occupancy” for the business where fireworks will be sold.

**STEP 2.** If you plan to sell fireworks in a temporary stand, you need to receive a building permit from **DCRA** to build your stand. You may also need additional permits if you’re building a temporary stand with electricity or using a generator. Once the structure is built, you will need to have **DCRA** inspect and approve the structure.

**STEP 3.** You need to obtain a Basic Business License from **DCRA** for temporary, retail and wholesale fireworks sales. Business licenses for fireworks sales are only available on an annual basis during a 10-day period in June.

**STEP 4.** Once you have received the needed approvals from **DCRA**, you will need to seek a Fireworks Permit and Inspection from **FEMS** before sales can begin. FEMS Fireworks Permits are only available on a temporary basis during a 10-day period in June.

#### ON THE WEB

Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

[www.dkra.dc.gov](http://www.dkra.dc.gov)

Fire & Emergency Medical Services Department

[www.fems.dc.gov](http://www.fems.dc.gov)

### How To Pass A FEMS Fireworks Inspection

FEMS Fire Inspectors regularly inspect all businesses that store and/or sell fireworks. FEMS Inspectors check for:

- Fireworks Basic Business License
- Approved *No Smoking* Sign
- Valid FEMS Fireworks Permit
- Fire-Hazard-free structures
- Approved Fireworks with tapped and secure fuses
- Approved, properly maintained fire extinguishers
- Unobstructed, working entrances
- Unobstructed exits and exit signs

The **FEMS Fire Prevention Division** approves the list of fireworks that can be legally sold on an annual basis. To obtain the list of approved fireworks, visit [fems.dc.gov](http://fems.dc.gov) under “Fireworks Safety and Inspections” or call **(202) 727-1600**.

### Fast Facts on Fireworks Sales

#### What fireworks are legal?

Generally, legal fireworks include non-moving items like sparklers (under 20-inches), torches, box fires, cones, dip sticks, snakes, paper novelty items, color lights and paper caps.

#### What fireworks are illegal?

Generally, all moving and exploding items are illegal including fire-crackers and cherry bombs, roman candles, bottle rockets, floral shells and artillery shells.

#### What’s the penalty for possessing, using or selling illegal fireworks?

Penalties can be up to \$1,000 and violators may be prosecuted and face additional fines and jail time.

#### Can a sidewalk or street vendor sell fireworks?

No. It’s illegal to sell fireworks on public property.

### Report Illegal Fireworks Sales

To report illegal fireworks sales or to learn more about fireworks safety, call FEMS Fire Prevention Division at (202) 727-1600.